

STATE AUTOMATION SYSTEMS STUDY

SITE VISIT: MAY 11 - 14, 1993

ALASKA STATE REPORT

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FINAL

Prepared for:

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THE ORKAND CORPORATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
STATE PROFILE	1
1.0 STATE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT	2
2.0 FOOD STAMP PROGRAM OPERATIONS	3
2.1 Food Stamp Program Participation	3
2.2 FSP Benefits Issued Versus FSP Administrative Costs	3
2.3 FSP Administrative Costs	4
2.4 System Impacts on Program Performance	4
2.4.1 Staffing	5
2.4.2 Responsiveness to Regulatory Change	5
2.4.3 Combined Official Payment Error Rate	5
2.4.4 Claims Collection	6
2.4.5 Certification/Reviews	6
3.0 OVERVIEW OF THE SYSTEM	6
3.1 System Functionality	6
3.2 Level of Integration/Complexity	9
3.3 Workstation/Caseworker Ratio	10
3.4 Current Automation Issues	10
4.0 SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION	10
4.1 Overview of Previous System	10
4.2 Justification for the New System	11

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
4.3 Development and Implementation Activities	11
4.4 Conversion Approach	11
4.5 Project Management	11
4.6 FSP Participation	12
4.7 MIS Participation	12
4.8 Problems Encountered During Development and Implementation	12
5.0 TRANSFERABILITY	12
6.0 SYSTEM OPERATIONS	13
6.1 System Profile	13
6.2 Description of Operating Environment	13
6.2.1 Operating Environment	13
6.2.2 State Operations and Maintenance	14
6.2.3 Telecommunications	14
6.2.4 System Performance	15
6.2.5 System Response	15
6.2.6 System Downtime	15
6.2.7 Current Activities and Future Plans	15
7.0 COST AND COST ALLOCATION	16
7.1 EIS Development Costs and Federal Funding	16
7.1.1 EIS System Components	16

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
7.1.2 Major EIS Development Cost Components	16
7.1.2.1 Hardware	16
7.1.2.2 Contractor Costs	17
7.1.2.3 State Personnel Costs	17
7.1.3 EIS Redesign Planning Costs	17
7.2 EIS Operating Costs	18
7.2.1 Cost Per Case	18
7.2.2 ADP Operational Cost Control Measures and Practices	18
7.3 Alaska Cost Allocation Methodologies	19
7.3.1 Overview of EIS Development Cost Allocation Methodology	19
7.3.2 EIS Operational Cost Allocation Methodologies and Mechanics	19

APPENDICES

A	State of Alaska Exhibits	A-1
B	Analysis of Managerial User Satisfaction	B-1
C	Analysis of Operator User Satisfaction	C-1

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table No.</u>		<u>Page</u>
2.1	Average Monthly Public Assistance Participation	3
2.2	FSP Benefits Issued	4
2.3	FSP Federal Administrative Costs	4
2.4	Official Combined Error Rate	5
2.5	Total Claims Established/Collected	6
7.1	EIS FSP Operating Costs	18
7.2	Eligibility Systems Maintenance Cost Categories	20

APPENDIX A - State of Alaska Exhibits

Exhibit No.

A-2.1	Response to Regulatory Changes	A-2
A-6.1	State of Alaska Hardware Inventory	A-4

ALASKA STATE REPORT
Site Visit May 11-14, 1993

STATE PROFILE

System Name: Eligibility Information System (EIS)

Start Date: 1981

Completion Date: 1984

Contractor: None

Transfer From: Developed in-house

Cost:¹

Actual: \$4.4 million

Projected: Unknown

FSP Share: Unknown

FSP %: Unknown

Number of Users: 678

Basic Architecture:

Mainframe: Amdahl 5990-700 (MVS/XA)

Workstations: Memorex/Telex 3270-type

Telecommunications Network: 300 circuit land line/Microwave/Satellite digital and analog network

System Profile:

Programs: Food Stamp, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Medicaid, General Assistance, Adult Public Assistance, General Relief, and General Relief Medical

¹ No documentation for the original cost estimates or FNS share was available.

1.0 STATE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

The Division of Public Assistance (DPA) in Alaska administers the Food Stamp Program (FSP). DPA is under the direction of the commissioner of the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS). The major programs supported by DPA are Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), FSP, Medicaid, and General Assistance (GA).

Alaska is mainly rural and includes a very large and diverse geographic area. The rugged terrain and extreme climactic conditions make administration of FSP a unique challenge. Because of the wide cultural differences and remote locations of many applicants, communication can be very difficult. Despite its size, Alaska ranks forty-ninth among the States in terms of population, with 551,947 people in 1990.

DPA contains seven administrative sections: Cash Programs, System Operations, Field Operations, Food Stamps/Energy Assistance, Quality Control, Special Projects, and Alaska Work Programs. System Operations is responsible for Eligibility Information System (EIS) enhancements, changes, reports, and welfare benefit processing. Field Operations operates the 15 State-staffed client service offices located throughout the State and has paid "fee agents" in about 250 additional communities; there are three offices with caseloads of less than 125 people. The local operations range from the "traditional" urban caseload in Anchorage to the administration of the fee agent system for the remote towns and villages.

Alaska's unemployment rate averaged almost 10 percent between 1980 and 1985. Between 1986 and 1991 the rate has fluctuated but has been somewhat lower than 10 percent on average. It reached an all-time low of 6.7 percent in 1989 and rose to 8.5 percent in 1991.

The October 1992 report, *The Fiscal Survey of States*, provides the following information compiled by the National Association of State Budget Officers:

- Alaska's nominal expenditure growth for Fiscal Year (FY) 1993 was negative; the national average for expenditure growth was 2.4 percent.
- State government employment levels in Alaska decreased by 0.23 percent. This change is similar to the national 0.60 percent average decrease in State government employment.
- Alaska's FY 1993 net revenues increased by \$13.7 million due to an increase in fees.
- The regional outlook for the Far West region indicated that the region is below average compared to the national economy. The regional weighted unemployment rate of 8.8 percent was higher than the national average of 7.8 percent. The region's per capita personal income increase of 1.6 percent was lower than the national average increase of 2.4 percent.

2.0 FOOD STAMP PROGRAM OPERATIONS

FSP in Alaska relies upon the support of the Department of Administration (DOA) for the design and operation of the telecommunications system in place (EIS) and the planning and implementation of any future system. EIS consists of 1,700 on-line and 600 batch programs at the Anchorage Data Center (ADC). EIS supports FSP throughout the State. This system was implemented in 1984 and is an integrated eligibility determination and issuance system. The Alaska State Accounting System (AKSAS) is a State accounting system used for payroll budget tracking, invoices, and other payments.

2.1 Food Stamp Program Participation

As shown in Table 2.1, FSP household cases have increased by 37.8 percent from 1988 to 1992, while AFDC cases have increased by 49.3 percent during the same period.

Table 2.1 Average Monthly Public Assistance Participation²

PROGRAM	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988
AFDC					
Cases	11,309	9,678	7,720	7,543	7,572
Recipients	32,796	28,092	20,072	19,612	19,687
GA					
Cases	379	379	588	598	599
Individuals	473	473	764	777	779
FSP					
Households	14,305	11,931	9,605	9,934	10,371
Individuals	43,058	35,912	29,046	29,901	31,217
Medicaid					
Households	27,648	23,463	19,754	18,210	16,708
Individuals	49,766	42,233	31,606	29,136	26,733

2.2 FSP Benefits Issued Versus FSP Administrative Costs

The ratio of benefits issued to FSP administrative costs has improved slightly from 5.4:1 in 1988 to 5.8:1 in 1992. The State's average monthly benefit issuance per household over the last five years, as provided in Table 2.2, has fluctuated.³

² All data supplied by State staff.

³ The number of households and benefit amounts use data reported in the FNS *State Activity Reports* each year.

Table 2.2 FSP Benefits Issued

	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988
Average Monthly Benefit Per Household	\$277.31	\$280.07	\$249.52	\$225.96	\$234.24

2.3 FSP Administrative Costs

The State's FSP administrative costs for the past five years are provided in Table 2.3.⁴ The data indicate that total administrative costs increased each year from 1988 to 1992, except for 1991. It also shows that the average cost per household fluctuated, but was always unusually high.

Table 2.3 FSP Federal Administrative Costs

	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988
Total FSP Federal Admin. Cost	\$7,065,034	\$4,714,266	\$5,338,550	\$5,263,614	\$4,984,216
Avg. Federal Admin. Cost Per Household Per Month	\$47.73	\$38.88	\$52.79	\$49.43	\$43.54

2.4 System Impacts on Program Performance

The impact that automated systems have on program performance is limited to those areas where increased efficiency in handling the work flow necessitated by program rules, regulations, and policy may be measured.

Other areas of increased efficiency may, in fact, increase the workload of the line-level employee because of the increased information available to them through automated systems.

The areas of staffing, responsiveness to regulatory change, combined official payment error rates, claims collection, and certification/reviews were examined to determine the impact automation has had on the State's FSP.

⁴ The number of households and FSP Federal administrative costs are derived from data reported in the FNS *State Activity Reports* each year.

2.4.1 Staffing

State staff report that the average monthly caseload per eligibility worker (EW) has increased during the past five years as has the case backlog. Caseworker staffing levels were reported to have increased over this same period.

The specific impacts of EIS on caseworker staffing is unknown as of this time, although staff levels have increased since the system was implemented. The system has been operational for so long that any impact on overall operations would be normalized by the time of the State study.

Determination of staffing levels is the responsibility of the Field Operations Section of DPA. Caseworkers can be generic or program specific depending on the particular office. FSP caseworker levels are thus predicated on overall program caseload requirements. Most EWs handle AFDC, FSP, and Medicaid cases. Some specialize in public assistance (PA), GA, or Medicaid while some handle all programs. Some EWs specialize in areas of performance, such as intake or maintenance. This wide variation results mainly from office size and location.

2.4.2 Responsiveness to Regulatory Change

Of the 14 regulatory changes shown in Exhibit A-2.1, Appendix A, two were not implemented within the mandatory timeframes (273.8(e)(17) and 274.9(f)(4)) because of the lack of programming staff to make the programming changes required. Three additional changes were not relevant to the State's operations (273.9(c)(5)(i)(F), 273.9(c)(1)(ii), and 273.10(a)(1)(ii)) and the State was granted a waiver for a fourth provision (274.2(c)(1)).

2.4.3 Combined Official Payment Error Rate

The State's official combined error rate, as indicated in Table 2.4, has fluctuated between 1988 and 1992. In the years immediately after EIS was implemented the error rate fell, to a low of 6.49 percent in 1987. The State's error rate has generally showed an improving trend since 1989.

Table 2.4 Official Combined Error Rate

	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988
Combined Error Rate	8.32	7.58	7.38	10.49	10.43

2.4.4 Claims Collection

The amount of claims established has fluctuated slightly over the last five years as has the value of the claims collected. The percentage of claims collected decreased from a high of 88 percent in 1989 to about 66 percent in 1992.

Table 2.5 Total Claims Established/Collected

	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988
Total Claims Established	\$384,908	\$362,127	\$338,480	\$346,776	\$403,240
Total Claims Collected	\$253,341	\$271,237	\$245,823	\$305,694	\$224,916
As a % of Total Claims Established	65.8%	74.9%	72.6%	88.0%	55.8%

2.4.5 Certification/Reviews

EIS was certified by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) as a Family Assistance Management Information System (FAMIS) in 1985.

3.0 OVERVIEW OF THE SYSTEM

This section describes the functionality, level of integration, and complexity of EIS.

3.1 System Functionality

- **Registration.** An applicant for public assistance either fills out an application form and presents it to an intake clerk at a local welfare office or mails a completed application to the nearest office. Clerks generally register all applications. They register the applications on the system, perform Income and Eligibility Verification System (IEVS) interface and prior participation checks, screen for expedited service, set up casework files, and schedule interviews. The basic identifying information entered into EIS includes name, Social Security number (SSN) for all household members, address, telephone number, programs applied for, and date of birth.

EIS uses SSNs to screen for duplicate participation. It also searches name, date of birth, sex, race, and possible client identification number. The system checks for current or previous participation in AFDC or FSP. The results of the interface

checks are printed out for use by EWs; in some instances, key registration screens are printed out also. If a need for expedited service is determined by the clerical worker, the application is turned over to an EW for immediate processing.

- ***Eligibility Determination.*** Eligibility determination is performed by a caseworker either from information obtained from a printed application form completed by the applicant prior to the actual interview or from information obtained from the applicant during the interview. Data entry is performed by EWs both on-line during the interview and after the interview, depending on the office. The data entry screens parallel the application form, although not exactly, and have on-line editing capability. The relevant data entry screens are table-driven and determined by EIS based on the programs registered. The system provides an on-line verification log and on-line screen alerts to EWs to verify data. When all the relevant income and resource information has been supplied, the system determines the client's eligibility.

The system provides on-line verification status fields that are used to confirm receipt of required documentation and provides on-line verifications log of unresolved matches and verifications. Verification status fields must be completed before eligibility is determined or the case will be postponed.

- ***Benefit Calculation.*** Benefit calculations are performed automatically by EIS from budget, asset, and income data entered by EWs. EWs must review and authorize benefit levels as well as eligibility determination.

The system supports prospective and retrospective budgeting of income and expenses for determination of eligibility and benefit amount.

- ***Benefit Issuance.*** Most issuance is by direct coupon mailout (about 70 percent); the remainder, in Anchorage, is by authorization-to-participate (ATP) cards which are mailed directly to households on a monthly basis, non-staggered, during the first few working days of the month. The ATPs are taken to the U.S. Post Office to be redeemed for food stamp coupons. The direct coupon stuffing and mailing process is performed by contractors who work from an issuance report prepared by the system. There is no issuance from local offices.

Non-delivered ATPs and coupons are returned to a central site for reconciliation. The contractor does inventory tracking and reporting. Replacement benefits may be requested by EWs on-line and will be reissued the next working day. EIS links document numbers of original and replacement issuances, provides on-line display of more than 12 months of issuance history, and supplies information for those issuance reports required by the Federal government.

- ***Notices.*** EIS generates a full range of notices including both automatic (system generated) and worker-initiated notices. Each notice may contain free-form text

entered by EWs, except for those automatically generated. the input of EWs into worker-generated notices is available on-line.

The system supports numerous notice types, including those listed below:

- Key events related to household participation
- Key events related to household eligibility
- Warning that a monthly report was not received
- Denial because of failure to keep interview appointment
- Eligibility determination results
- Benefit reductions
- Benefit increases
- Application approval
- Denial based on eligibility determination
- Closure based on recertification information
- Missing verifications

The average number of notices generated per month, for all programs, was 40,000.

- ***Claims System.*** The State's claims system is an integrated module of EIS. A special claims unit enters data related to the cause of overpayments or underpayments and whether fraud is suspected. The corrected benefit allotment amount is calculated by the system.

EIS tracks the claim status, calculates the monthly recoupment amount (given the above limitations), subtracts the recoupment amount from the recipient's monthly benefit, generates a notice to the recipient regarding overpayment or underpayment, and automatically creates a collection record.

Once the collection method is set up by the claims worker, the system deducts any recoupments as part of the issuance process and displays a screen with the complete collection record.

- ***Computer Matching.*** After initial certification EIS performs on-line checks against these State databases: labor files from the Department of Labor (DOL) for wage information and for unemployment insurance benefits, GA files, and Medicaid files.

After certification, regular matches are made against these databases as well: Social Security Administration (SSA) wages and benefits, SSA self employment, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits, Internal Revenue Service (IRS) tax files, the Beneficiary Data Exchange (BENDEX), the State Data exchange (SDX), the Benefit Earning Exchanges System (BEERS), a local public information access system and the Child Support Enforcement Division (CSED).

Duplicate participation checks are performed at certification and initial clearance and whenever a new household member is added to the case.

- **Alerts.** EIS displays numerous alerts to caseworkers and supervisors. These include discrepancies reported through computer matching, interviews scheduled, notices to be sent, redeterminations due, pending applications, and transferred cases.

All discrepancies between reported data and that shown in other databases are reported to EWs in the form of on-line messages. Alerts are prioritized by the system on the basis of length of time on the system. EWs delete these discrepancy items after they have been resolved.

- **Monthly Reporting.** The State requires monthly reporting from all AFDC, some Medicaid, and most FSP cases. Only those clients with exemptions are not required to file monthly reports. The system produces the monthly report forms for mailing, directs the returned forms to the appropriate EW, and generates warning notices for clients whose monthly report form is not received on time. The reports are manually registered and the case is automatically closed if not registered on time. The processing and input of monthly report data makes up a large percentage of the case maintenance workflow in the field offices.
- **Reports.** EIS automatically produces the Food Stamp Mail Issuance Report, the Monthly Reconciliation Report, the Report on Untransacted Outstanding ATPs, and other regular reports supporting food stamp Federal reporting requirements. Ad hoc reports can be produced but require an extensive system effort.
- **Program Management and Administration.** EIS provides an electronic mail package called SYSM that is used for communication within DPA and within the interagency staff.

3.2 Level of Integration/Complexity

EIS is an integrated system that supports the major program areas of FSP, AFDC, GA, and Medicaid. Other divisions that utilize EIS are: CSED, the Division of Administrative Services, the Bureau of Vital Statistics, the Division of Public Health, and the Division of Medical Assistance (DMA). The technical aspects of the system reflect the mainframe-based, dumb terminal concept on which it is based.

EIS interfaces with other State systems to support computer matching and claims processing. Users can perform computer matches against State DOL files and AKSAS.

3.3 Workstation/Caseworker Ratio

There are 195 EWs and 19 EW supervisors using EIS in Alaska. There is also a varying number of fee agents who are employed to take assistance applications in about 250 villages. The current terminal to caseworker ratio is 1:1.

3.4 Current Automation Issues

Since EIS was implemented almost 10 years ago, it has become quite outdated. The system lacks the automation that would allow for the elimination of local forms, screen printing, and the manual logging activities that are now being performed. It also lacks the kinds of management control tools, such as consistent and appropriate management reporting information, required to efficiently handle increasing caseloads and Federal reporting requirements. The eligibility determination and benefit calculation component needs to be redesigned to include all policies and calculations for all assistance programs and increase flexibility and modularity. Design constraints within EIS and the shortage of programming and testing staff prevent the Systems Operation Section from completing all but the highest priority work requests, usually mandated policy changes. The Quality Control function could, if it were more automated, eliminate paper and facilitate timeliness. The issuances processes would need to be redesigned to allow new technologies, such as Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT), to be implemented and eliminate many of the paper-driven procedures that have been developed.

The limitations of the EIS design hamper efforts of the management and caseworkers to improve efficiency of the service delivery system and provide solutions to the changing PA environment. There is an EIS redesign effort underway that is still in the planning phase.

4.0 SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Alaska is currently in the planning stages of a new system development effort. This section of the report describes the preliminary processes used to develop this new system. The description of the previous system in section 4.1 refers to the existing system.

4.1 Overview of the Previous System

Alaska began planning an integrated, automated data processing (ADP) system, EIS, in 1980. It was designed to perform ADP functions for AFDC and FSP only. It was implemented statewide by June 1984 and was certified by ACF as a FAMIS system in 1985. In 1985 the State added benefit calculation, delivery, and reporting functions for State-only and Medicaid programs. These programs were added with a more limited scope of data processing capability. The functionality of this system is detailed in section 3.1.

4.2 Justification for the New System

A systems analysis was performed on EIS by Eligibility Management Systems (EMS), Inc. and a report produced in September 1992. This report concluded that the system was in need of significant redesign to meet the demands forecast for it in the next three years. Recent efforts have already increased the processing efficiency of the system to a level that would be difficult to improve upon within the current software and database structures. In addition, there were specific problems, such as an excessive work request backlog, that the addition of subsystems and workarounds would not alleviate. The projected financial benefits of a new system were quantified (for the third full fiscal year of operation) as follows:

- Increased productivity - \$1.2 million
- AFDC error reduction - \$4.6 million
- FSP error reduction - \$2.6 million
- Medicaid error reduction - \$5.4 million
- State program error reduction - \$1.1 million
- Enhanced food stamp match - \$0.6 million
- Cost avoidance - \$5.4 million
- Increased claims collections - \$0.2 million
- Eliminating current system - \$4.8 million

Thus, the enhanced level of automation provided by a completely enhanced or newly developed alternative would result in a savings of almost \$26 million.

4.3 Development and Implementation Activities

In February 1992 a Preliminary Advanced Planning Document (PAPD) was submitted and approved. In March 1992, a Request for Proposals (RFP) Feasibility Study for EIS was released. In January 1993, a Systems Alternative Analysis Report was produced by EMS, Inc. This report identified the various strategies for enhancing or replacing EIS and provided a cost-benefit analysis for each alternative. The alternatives consisted of an enhanced and redesigned version of the present system for \$28.4 million, a transferred and modified system from an unspecified State at a cost of \$24.5 million, and a newly-developed system for \$32.2 million.

4.4 Conversion Approach

The conversion approach has not yet been determined.

4.5 Project Management

The new system project management organization is centered around a project manager

An EIS Steering Committee (ESC) was established to set priorities and policies and decide the direction of the project. The ESC is composed of senior management personnel representing DPA, the Office of Management and Budget, and ADC.

A Management Advisory Committee (MAC) was formed to review milestones, review deliverables, and make recommendations to ESC. Its members include agency managers and administrators drawn from DPA and DMA.

4.6 FSP Participation

System users will be involved by means of an Internal User Advisory Committee (IUAC) which will consist of EWs who work directly with clients and are involved with determining eligibility. The IUAC will help the contractor develop a thorough understanding of user needs and problems. Members of the IUAC will include experienced AFDC and FSP caseworkers who will be able to explain program policy and system requirements and will assist in defining step-by-step work flow.

4.7 MIS Participation

A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has been formed to advise the project director on all Management Information System (MIS) technical matters concerning systems analysis. TAC will coordinate information among the project staff, the contractor, Systems Operations, and ADC. It will review all technical deliverables and coordinate the technical tasks of the project as needed. Members include programmer/analysts, database administrators, and data processing personnel and are drawn from Information Services, Systems Operations, DMA, and DHSS.

4.8 Problems Encountered During Development and Implementation

No major problems have been encountered thus far in the EIS replacement project.

5.0 TRANSFERABILITY

EIS is the original mainframe-based, dumb terminal, technical eligibility computer system. Since it was the earliest integrated system and FAMIS certified by ACF in 1985, it has been transferred extensively. North Dakota transferred it first, in 1984; it was subsequently transferred from North Dakota to Mississippi in 1986. Arizona transferred it in 1985; it was then transferred from Arizona to Utah (1985), Hawaii (1985), South Carolina (1987), and Kansas (1987). The Hawaii version of EIS was subsequently transferred to Montana. The South Carolina version was transferred to Washington, D.C. in 1989. It was last transferred from Alaska by Wyoming in 1986. EIS demonstrated a tried and tested technology that was further refined to add functionality that fit the operational needs of each State into which it was transferred. At this point, its technology is very outdated and it is unlikely to be transferred again.

6.0 SYSTEMS OPERATION

The following section provides a description of EIS. The description includes a profile of system hardware and a discussion of the system operating environment.

6.1 System Profile

- **Mainframe:** Amdahl 5990/700
MVS/XA, ADABAS, CICS, ACF2
- **Disk:** Amdahl 6380
- **Tape:** IBM 3420 Reel
IBM 3480 Cartridge
- **Printers:** IBM 3835 Laser
IBM 4245 Impact
IBM 3816 Impact
- **Front Ends:** IBM 3725
- **Workstations:** Memorex/Telex 3270-type
Courier 3270-type
IBM 3270
- **Telecommunications:** Statewide SNA land line network connected via microwave and satellite

6.2 Description of Operating Environment

This section contains a description of the current operating system environment, including maintenance, telecommunications, performance, response time, and downtime. Current system activities and future plans are also discussed.

6.2.1 Operating Environment

ADC is a single mainframe environment which operates 7 days a week, 24 hours a day in support of EIS, CSED, Public Safety, Land Administration, Voter Registration, Election Management, Alaska Court System, Oil and Gas Accounting, Fish and Game, Offender Based Corrections Information System, and Application Development Testing.

The hardware environment consists of an Amdahl 5990/700 under MVS/XA, running three on-line regions, and utilizes the Amdahl Multiple Domain Feature (MDF) to allocate a portion of the hardware resources to application development. Additional hardware includes an IBM 3380 direct access storage device (DASD) (currently 92 gigabytes installed), 3420 tape reel drives (4), 3480 tape cartridge transports (16), and a 3725 Front

End Processor (FEP). Printing is supported by an IBM 3835 laser printer and IBM 4245 and 3816 impact printers. Major software packages include CICS, COBOL II, ADABAS, Natural, TSO, Roscoe, ACF2, SAS, and a variety of Computer Associate (CA) software products, including CA Scheduler and CA Librarian.

The data center staff consists of 26 personnel - operators (6), system programmers (5), telecommunications network control (4), database administration (3), customer support (2), data control (3), and management (3).

6.2.2 State Operations and Maintenance

DHSS provides a staff of five programmer analysts who support the current EIS. The staff is located in Anchorage and has easy access to the data center. The FSP policy group is located in Juneau.

The data center is operated by DOA which charges DHSS for resources used as determined by a software accounting system. It is estimated that EIS uses 20 percent of the mainframe resource and 10 percent of DASD. Communication, both formal and informal, is ongoing to track EIS performance and resolve system problems. The working relationship between the two areas appears to be very cooperative.

Hardware and software maintenance is performed at various times depending on the potential impact on production processing. Most backup work is completed on Sundays, as is any scheduled hardware diagnostic and repair work. System and application software changes are installed after thorough testing and at a time mutually agreed upon by the data center and application support staff.

Dual generators with battery cutover capability provide a strong power interruption override. Action is underway to develop a disaster recovery plan, however, there is no functional plan in place today. Juneau's data center installation of an Amdahl 5990/1400 within the past year provides a potential site within the State for a mutual backup disaster recovery operation.

6.2.3 Telecommunications

Alaska has a unique telecommunications network driven by the State's geography of extensive rural areas and isolated communities. There are three primary network locations: Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau. These locations are connected to each other by 56 KB circuits (two between Anchorage and Juneau to handle the higher transaction workloads). From each of these locations a variety of land lines, satellite, and microwave links connect each local office to the primary node. A total of approximately 300 circuits make up the entire Alaska network. These circuits use 2.4, 4.8, and 9.6 KB speeds. Each location has a switch which directs application dependent transactions to the specific processor handling that application. All EIS transactions are directed to Anchorage.

Improvements in the network are totally dependent on the capability of the local telecommunications carrier and the cost of delivering a new circuit to a local office. New circuits can cost as much as \$2,000 per month. Additionally, all locations west of Anchorage/Fairbanks can only be supported by satellite link, a factor which introduces much more transmission delay than either microwave or land lines. Although improvements are underway to upgrade more circuits to microwave, the western half of the State still operates under restricted telecommunications capability.

6.2.4 System Performance

The Amdahl 5990/700 has been installed for more than two years and has performed extremely well. Average utilization for the first shift is approximately 50 percent and there appears to be more than enough room to accommodate application growth for the next 18 to 36 months. Additional DASD (IBM 3390) is expected to be approved, thus increasing storage capacity by nearly 50 percent. Tape conversion from reel to cartridge is nearly finished, with the present library containing approximately 7,000 volumes.

There is adequate room for equipment expansion today and the implementation of more space conscious hardware, i.e., 3390 versus 3380, will help consolidate floor space. An IBM 3800 laser printer is in the process of being discontinued and will also free up space.

6.2.5 System Response

While response time tracking at the terminal is not being monitored, both DHSS and DOA staff stated that terminal response times on locally attached and microwave-connected circuits were in the one to two second range with some degradation during peak processing periods. Satellite-connected circuits have response times that were in the five to ten second range; these times will probably not improve due the high cost and lack of availability of improved technology.

6.2.6 System Downtime

Downtime was not viewed as an issue by either FSP (DHSS) or data center staff. Only two outages have occurred during the past two years, one of which did not impact production processing. On-site Amdahl field engineers, a full on-site repair parts inventory, and an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) system (which is tested at least monthly) have helped preclude any major outages.

6.2.7 Current Activities and Future Plans

Planned upgrades over the next 12 to 24 months include implementation of MVS/ESA, new IBM 3390 DASD, and improvement of the Anchorage-Juneau telecommunications network.

7.0 COST AND COST ALLOCATION

This section of the report addresses EIS development costs and approved Federal funding. EIS redesign pre-planning and planning activities, on-going EIS operating costs, and cost allocation methodologies applied to allocating development and operating costs. Since EIS has been operational for more than 10 years, detailed cost records for the EIS development effort, including the APD and budget, are not available.

7.1 EIS Development Costs and Federal Funding

The APD for the current EIS was prepared around 1980; the dates on which the APD was submitted to and approved by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) are not available. EIS was designed in 1982 to support AFDC and FSP. The EIS pilot began in October 1983. Statewide implementation was completed in June 1984.

The total cost of the EIS development was approximately \$4.4 million. By July 1983, prior to the start of the pilot and conversion, \$3.5 million in EIS development costs were incurred.⁵ The remaining costs were incurred during conversion and implementation for additional State staff and terminals.

The FNS share of the \$4.4 million was estimated to be between 30 and 40 percent, or between \$1.32 and \$1.76 million.⁶ The FNS Federal financial participation (FFP) rate was 75 percent.

7.1.1 EIS System Components

The EIS implemented in 1984 supported only AFDC and FSP. Since then, EIS has been upgraded to support 12 additional State and Federal assistance programs. The costs of these upgrades are not included as part of the \$4.4 million. Additional costs for these upgrades allocated to FSP were reimbursed at regular funding levels. These costs were not identified.

7.1.2 Major EIS Development Cost Components

The major costs associated with EIS development were for hardware, contractor compensation, and State personnel support. These are addressed below.

7.1.2.1 Hardware

Approximately \$493,000 was expended for telecommunications equipment, terminals, and printers. No further breakout by component was provided.

⁵ As documented in an EIS status briefing.

⁶ The estimates were provided by EIS development project participants; no documentation or correspondence was available.

The State purchased a \$5 million mainframe to support EIS operations. Since EIS uses approximately 20 percent of the available central processing unit (CPU) capacity, DPA was allocated 20 percent of the costs of the mainframe, or \$1 million. The cost of the mainframe was billed to the division as a component of EIS operating costs.

7.1.2.2 Contractor Costs

The development and implementation contract was awarded to Systemhouse, Inc. The firm fixed-price contract was let for \$1.6 million for an 18-month period. The contract was extended to 30 months and increased to \$2.2 million. A portion of this increase was granted to accommodate changes in program policy. The increase also covered the cost of using a Systemhouse, Inc. computer for development rather than a computer owned by the State. The specific portion of the increase allotted to each type of increase was not available.

An additional \$800,000 was paid to Systemhouse, Inc. during the development period to cover the costs of system enhancements not addressed in the original contract. Therefore, the total paid to Systemhouse, Inc. for development services was approximately \$3 million.

Systemhouse, Inc. was awarded a time and materials contract to support EIS maintenance for a two-year period beginning June 1984. The cost for these services was estimated to be between \$250,000 to \$300,000 for each year of the contract. System capabilities added during this period include support for the Adult Public Assistance Program (\$160,000), General Relief, and some Medicaid Eligibility. FNS was allotted 40 percent of the cost of these services; DHHS assumed the remaining 60 percent. This allocation was agreed to by all parties involved.

DHSS assumed full responsibility for EIS maintenance in 1987. Contractor services were no longer used.

7.1.2.3 State Personnel Costs

Documented State personnel costs associated with EIS development as of July 1983 were approximately \$510,000. Additional costs were incurred after that period, but the exact dollar amount was not documented.

7.1.3 EIS Redesign Planning Costs

In February 1992, FNS approved an RFP to acquire a professional services contractor to support EIS redesign activities. These activities included conducting a feasibility study for evaluating the best course of action to upgrade the existing EIS, performing a cost benefit analysis on each alternative, and developing an implementation APD (IAPD) and an RFP for a development and implementation contractor.

A contract to provide these services through June 1992 was awarded to EMS, Inc. for \$326,740. The amount actually paid for these services to date is \$297,937. The FNS share of this amount was 26 percent, or \$77,463; reimbursement was at the 50 percent funding level, or \$38,731.

Alaska has not authorized funding for follow-on activities. All IAPD preparation activities have been halted pending funding approval.

7.2 EIS Operational Costs

Total EIS operating costs are approximately \$4.4 million per year.⁷ Besides AFDC and FSP, EIS has been upgraded to support other programs such as Child Care, JOBS, Pregnant Women, PA, and General Relief. FSP is allocated approximately 45 percent of EIS operating costs.

The EIS operating costs per Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) presented in Table 7.1, EIS FSP System Operating Costs, were extracted from the SF-269 forms provided to FNS.

Table 7.1 EIS FSP Operating Costs

Federal Fiscal Year	Annual Operating Costs (millions)	Average Monthly Operating Costs	FNS FFP at 50% (millions)
FFY91	\$2.5	\$208,000	\$1.25
FFY92	\$2.0	\$167,000	\$1.00
FFY93 (Two Quarters)	\$1.3	\$217,000	\$0.65

7.2.1 Cost Per Case

The FSP share of EIS annual operating costs for 1992 was \$2.0 million. The FSP monthly cost was thus \$167,000. The cost per case -- based on the monthly participation of 14,305 food stamp households -- was \$11.67.

7.2.2 ADP Operational Cost Control Measures and Practices

The State Central Data Processing facility bills each State organization for the data processing services provided to that organization. The amount billed is based on the unit cost of a particular service. Unit costs are calculated based on the total costs of a particular item divided by the estimated usage volume.

⁷ The total EIS operating cost of \$4.4 million was calculated based on the annual FNS costs of \$2 million which represents a 45 percent allocation as documented in the Cost Survey.

The resources required by the DPA are submitted monthly to DHSS. These costs are allocated to the programs supported *only* after the bill is paid; there are no accruals. If the bill is delayed, those data processing costs may not appear on the SF-269 submitted to FNS for the quarter in which they were incurred.

7.3 Alaska Cost Allocation Methodologies

The following sections address the cost allocation methodologies used to allocate development costs during the initial EIS development, the EIS redesign effort, and ongoing operating costs.

7.3.1 Overview of EIS Development Cost Allocation Methodology

Documentation describing the approved methodology for allocating EIS development costs between FSP and AFDC was not available.

The allocation of costs for the EIS redesign effort was based on a fixed amount by program. The fixed amount was calculated based on the category of outstanding EIS requests. Work requests fell into one of two categories: requests which could be charged to a particular program supported by EIS (55 percent); requests which supported more than one program (45 percent), thus requiring that the costs of that work request be split among those programs. Those costs associated with work requests supporting multiple programs were then allocated by recipient count. Recipient count more accurately reflects the level of system work by program as each program has specific requirements by recipient as well as by case.

Using this approach, FSP was allocated 26 percent of the costs of the redesign activities, AFDC was allocated 32 percent, and Title IV-F and Medicaid Eligibility received a 10 and 25 percent allocation respectively. The State assumed a 7 percent share. FNS agreed to the 26 percent share in February 1992.

7.3.2 EIS Operational Cost Allocation Methodology and Mechanics

EIS operating costs are accumulated into the following cost centers:

- Commissioner's Office
- Budget and Finance
- Personnel and Payroll
- State Indirect Costs
- Public Assistance Administration
- Public Assistance Data Processing (Anchorage)

The State accounting system collects all transactions associated with PA programs into a set of accounts. Related accounts for each cost center are then assigned a *collocation code*. This code allows similar accounts with related costs to be grouped together. The

total of these grouped accounts is then entered into a spreadsheet application to be allocated among PA programs.

Except for the PA data processing cost center, the EIS operating costs are allocated to the FSP based on a Random Moment Time Study of EWs averaged with the three immediately preceding quarterly time studies.

The operating costs accumulated into the PA data processing cost center are shown in Table 7.2, Eligibility Systems Maintenance Cost Categories. This table shows the three cost categories associated with this cost center and the types of costs (cost components) accumulated into each category. Finally, it shows the means for allocating each cost component among PA programs.

Table 7.2 Eligibility Systems Maintenance Cost Categories

COST CATEGORY	COST COMPONENTS	ALLOCATIONMETHODOLOGY
Operations & Support	<p>Division's administrative and support costs including:</p> <p>Total cost of all salary and benefits for 23 DPA staff members working in the Anchorage data processing facility;</p> <p>Amount of chargeback for contracted services from the DOA, Division of information Services for data processing services;</p> <p>Computer supplies;</p> <p>Postage; and</p> <p>Printing and binding.</p>	<p>Random Moment Time Study of EWs averaged with three immediately-preceding quarterly time studies.</p>
Data System Operation	<p>State Central Data Processing facility services billed by the DOA, Division of Data Network Services including:</p> <p>EIS costs specifically identified between hardware/software and other operations costs;</p> <p>Charges directly related to FSP processing;</p> <p>Charges directly related to the SDX system;</p> <p>Charges directly related to the Medicaid system;</p> <p>Quality Control is allocated to all programs.</p>	<p>Random Moment Time Study of EWs averaged with three immediately-preceding quarterly time studies.</p> <p>Direct charged to FSP.</p> <p>Direct charged to the State programs.</p> <p>Direct charged to the Title XIX program.</p> <p>Quality Control Time Summary.</p>
Data Communications Network Operations	<p>Costs include: data line leases, equipment leases, connection fees, equipment upgrade, and installation.</p>	<p>Random Moment Time Study of EWs averaged with three immediately preceding quarterly time studies.</p>

APPENDIX A

STATE OF ALASKA

EXHIBITS

Exhibit A-2.1
Response to Regulatory Changes

Code	Regulation	Provision	Federally Required Implementation Date	Implemented on Time (Y/N)?	Computer Programming Changes Required (Y/N)?	Changes to State Policy/ Legislation Required (Y/N)?
1.1	1: Mickey Leland Memorial Domestic Hunger Relief Act	1: Excludes as income State or local GA payments to HHS provided as vendor payments. 273.9(c)(1)(ii)(F)	8/1/91	Y	Y	Y
2.2	1: Mickey Leland Memorial Domestic Hunger Relief Act	2: Excludes from income annual school clothing allowance however paid. 273.9(c)(5)(i)(F)	8/1/91	N/A	N/A	N/A
1.3	1: Mickey Leland Memorial Domestic Hunger Relief Act	3: Excludes as resource for Food Stamp purposes, household resources exempt by Public Assistance (PA) and SSI in mixed household. 273.8(e)(17)	2/1/92*	N	Y	Y
1.4	1: Mickey Leland Memorial Domestic Hunger Relief Act	4: State agency shall use a standard estimate of shelter expense for households with homeless members. 273.9(d)(5)(i)	2/1/92*	Y	N	Y
2.1	2: Administrative Improvement & Simplification Provisions of the Hunger Prevention Act	1: Extended resource exclusion of farm property and vehicles. 273.8(e)(5),etc.	7/1/89	Y	N	Y
2.2	2: Administrative Improvement & Simplification Provisions of the Hunger Prevention Act	2: Combined initial allotment under normal time frames. 274.2(b)(2)	1/1/90	Y	Y	Y

Exhibit A-2.1
Response to Regulatory Changes

Code	Regulation	Provision	Federally Required Implementation Date	Implemented on Time (Y/N)?	Computer Programming Changes Required (Y/N)?	Changes to State Policy/ Legislation Required (Y/N)?
2.3	2: Administrative Improvement & Simplification Provisions of the Hunger Prevention Act	3: Combined initial allotment under expedited service time frames. 274.2(b)(3)	1/1/90	Y	Y	Y
3.1	3: Disaster Assistance Act & Non-Discretionary Provisions of the Hunger Prevention Act	1: Exclusion of job stream migrant vendor payments. 273.9(c)(1)(ii)	9/1/88	N/A	N/A	N/A
3.2	3: Disaster Assistance Act & Non-Discretionary Provisions of the Hunger Prevention Act	2: Exclusion of advance earned income tax credit payments. 273.9(c)(14)	1/1/89*	Y	Y	Y
3.3	3: Disaster Assistance Act & Non-Discretionary Provisions of the Hunger Prevention Act	3: Increase dependent care deductions. 273.9(f)(4), etc.	10/1/88	N	Y	Y
3.4	3: Disaster Assistance Act & Non-Discretionary Provisions of the Hunger Prevention Act	4: Eliminate migrant initial month proration. 273.10(a)(1)(ii)	9/1/88	N/A	N/A	N/A
4.1	4: Issuance	1: Mail issuance must be staggered over at least ten days. 274.2(c)(1)	4/1/89	Waiver	N/A	N/A
4.2	4: Issuance	2: Limitation on the number of replacement issuances. 274.6(b)(2)	10/1/89	Y	Y	Y
4.3	4: Issuance	3: Destruction of unusable coupons within 30 days. 274.7(f)	4/1/89	Y	N	Y

* These dates were changed after the State completed this form and the site visit occurred; therefore, the responses to these particular regulatory changes may be inaccurate.

Exhibit A-6.1
State of Alaska
Hardware Inventory

Component	Make	Acquisition Method	Number/ Features
CPU			
5590/700	Amdahl	Purchase	64M (basic) 128M (extended)
DISK			
6380	Amdahl	Purchase	92 gigabyte DASD
TAPE			
3420	IBM	Purchase	Drives (4)
3480	IBM	Purchase	Cartridge transports (16)
PRINTERS			
3835	IBM	Purchase	Laser (1)
4245	IBM	Purchase	Impact (1)
3816	IBM	Purchase	Impact (1)
FRONT ENDS			
3725	IBM	Purchase	
REMOTE EQUIPMENT			
Dumb terminals	Telex (3270 type)	Purchase	
PCs (286, 386)	3270 emulation	Purchase	

APPENDIX B

STATE OF ALASKA

ANALYSIS OF OPERATOR USER SATISFACTION SURVEYS

OVERVIEW

This appendix presents the results of the Operational Level User Satisfaction Survey. Frequency counts of responses to all applicable items on the survey are included, grouped by the topic covered by the item. The results for the items covering each topic are summarized as well.

The responses to the Operational Level User Satisfaction Survey represent the perceptions of eligibility workers (EWs) in Alaska. In other words, these responses do not necessarily represent a "true" description of the situation in Alaska. For example, the results presented regarding the response time of the system reflect the workers' perceptions about response time, not an objective measure of the actual speed of the response.

Description of the Sample

The following table summarizes the potential population size and the final size of the sample who responded.

Number of EWs in Alaska	Number Selected to Receive Survey	Percentage Selected
164	63	38.4%
	Number Responding to Survey	Response Rate
	33	52.4%

The eligibility workers selected to receive the survey were selected randomly so their perceptions would be representative of EWs in Alaska. The number of responses, however, is low and produces a small sample that may not be representative of the randomly selected group.

Summary of Findings

Most of the respondents are satisfied with the computer system in Alaska. They generally find it provides acceptable response time, availability, accuracy, and ease of use. Nevertheless, EW responses indicate some perceived problems with particular features of the system. All workers think that the system is a great help

to them, but over 42 percent also think it increases stress.

Since Alaska's current system has been operational since 1984, comparisons between the current and previous systems would be of limited value. Responses to comparative questions, therefore, are not solicited for systems that were implemented more than five years ago.

SYSTEM CHARACTERISTICS

Response Time

What is the quality of overall system response time?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Poor	8	24.2
Good	17	51.5
Excellent	8	24.2

What is the quality of system response time during peak periods?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Poor	11	33.3
Good	19	57.6
Excellent	3	9.1

How often is the system response time too slow?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	6	18.2
Sometimes	21	63.6
Often	6	18.2

The majority of EWs think that system response time is acceptable. Approximately 75 percent of the eligibility workers think that overall system response time is excellent or good, and two-thirds of the workers believe that response time is excellent or good during peak processing periods. Over 80 percent of EWs, however, think that response time sometimes or often is too slow.

Availability

How often is the system available when you need to use it?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Sometimes	1	3.1
Often	31	96.9

How often is the system down?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	24	72.7
Sometimes	9	27.3

EWs believe that system availability is excellent. All workers surveyed except one believe that the system often is available when they need to use it, and more than 70 percent of EWs report that the system rarely is down.

Accuracy

What is the quality of the information in the system?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Poor	2	6.1
Good	23	69.7
Excellent	8	24.2

How often is a case terminated in error?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	26	83.9
Sometimes	5	16.1

How often is eligibility incorrectly determined?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	29	90.6
Sometimes	2	6.3
Often	1	3.1

How often is the system's data out-of-date?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	22	71.0
Sometimes	8	25.8
Often	1	3.2

The eligibility workers generally think that the system's data and computations are accurate. Almost 95 percent of EWs believe the quality of the data in the system is good or excellent. Significant majorities report that cases rarely are terminated in error, eligibility rarely is determined incorrectly, and the system rarely contains out-of-date information.

Ease of Use

How often do you have difficulty obtaining necessary information from the system?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	26	78.8
Sometimes	6	18.2
Often	1	3.0

How often do you have difficulty learning to use the system?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	22	66.7
Sometimes	10	30.3
Often	1	3.0

How often do you have difficulty tracking receipt of monthly reporting forms?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	26	78.8
Sometimes	6	18.2
Often	1	3.0

How often do you have difficulty automatically terminating benefits for failure to file?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	29	90.6
Sometimes	3	9.4

How often do you have difficulty generating adverse action notices?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	27	84.4
Sometimes	4	12.5
Often	1	3.1

How often do you have difficulty generating warning notices?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	27	84.4
Sometimes	5	15.6

How often do you have difficulty determining monthly reporting status?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	27	87.1
Sometimes	4	12.9

How often do you have difficulty restoring benefits?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	23	74.2
Sometimes	8	25.8

How often do you have difficulty identifying recipients already known to the State?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	21	65.6
Sometimes	10	31.3
Often	1	3.1

How often do you have difficulty updating registration data?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	22	66.7
Sometimes	9	27.3
Often	2	6.1

How often do you have difficulty updating eligibility and benefit information from recertification data?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	28	87.5
Sometimes	3	9.4
Often	1	3.1

How often do you have difficulty identifying cases which are overdue for recertification?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	23	74.2
Sometimes	5	16.1
Often	3	9.7

How often do you have difficulty monitoring the status of all hearings?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	7	50.0
Sometimes	2	14.3
Often	5	35.7

How often do you have difficulty tracking outstanding verifications?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	17	54.8
Sometimes	11	35.5
Often	3	9.7

How often do you have difficulty automatically notifying households of case actions?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	20	74.1
Sometimes	5	18.5
Often	2	7.4

How often do you have difficulty notifying recipients that recertification is required?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	23	76.7
Sometimes	6	20.0
Often	1	3.3

How often do you have difficulty identifying cases making payments through recoupment?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	20	69.0
Sometimes	6	20.7
Often	3	10.3

How often do you have difficulty identifying error prone cases?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	15	53.6
Sometimes	10	35.7
Often	3	10.7

How often do you have difficulty identifying cases involving suspected fraud?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	14	51.9
Sometimes	9	33.3
Often	4	14.8

How often do you have difficulty assigning new case numbers?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	23	79.3
Sometimes	3	10.3
Often	3	10.3

Eligibility workers' responses to these questions express the feeling that the majority of workers find the system easy to use for most functions. The principal exception involves monitoring the status of hearings. Over 35 percent of the EWs report frequent difficulty in performing this function. Nearly half of the EWs also report sometimes or often having difficulty identifying error prone cases, identifying suspected fraud cases, and tracking outstanding verifications.

FOOD STAMP PROGRAM NEEDS

Worker Satisfaction Levels

How often is the system a great help to you in your job?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Often	32	100.0

How often is the system an added stress in your job?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	19	57.6
Sometimes	14	42.4

How often is the system more of a problem than a help?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	28	87.5
Sometimes	4	12.5

All eligibility workers surveyed think that the system often is a great help in their jobs; however, over 42 percent of the workers believe that the system contributes to job-related stress. Nevertheless, a large majority of workers believe that the system usually is more of a help than a hindrance.

Client Service

How often is expedited service difficult to achieve?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	24	75.0
Sometimes	7	21.9
Often	1	3.1

How often do you have difficulty providing expedited services?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	26	78.8
Sometimes	6	18.2
Often	1	3.0

Approximately three quarters of surveyed EWs feel that there are few problems associated with providing expedited service to clients.

Fraud and Errors

No data are available to address fraud and errors with the Alaska system because all the questions in this category compare the current and previous systems. Since Alaska's system was implemented more than five years ago, comparative questions are not applicable.

APPENDIX C

STATE OF ALASKA

ANALYSIS OF MANAGERIAL USER SATISFACTION SURVEYS

OVERVIEW

This appendix presents the results of the Managerial Level User Satisfaction Survey. Frequency counts of responses to all applicable items on the survey are included, grouped by the topic covered by the item. The results for the items covering each topic are summarized as well.

The responses to the Managerial Level User Satisfaction Survey are the perceptions of eligibility worker (EW) supervisors in Alaska. In other words, these responses do not necessarily represent a "true" description of the situation in the State. For example, the results presented regarding the response time of the system reflect the managers' perceptions about that response time, not an objective measure of the actual speed of the response.

Description of the Sample

The following table summarizes the potential population size and the final size of the sample who responded.

Number of EW Supervisors in Alaska	Number Selected to Receive Survey	Percentage Selected
19	19	100.0%
	Number Responding to Survey	Response Rate
	10	52.6%

Alaska only has 19 EW supervisors; therefore, the survey was sent to the entire population rather than a sample. The small size of the population and the low response rate result in a small group of responding EW supervisors. Nevertheless, the survey results include input from more than half of the EW supervisor population in the State.

Summary of Findings

Most of the EW supervisors regard the system positively and believe that it helps them in their jobs. The vast majority of EW supervisors report that overall response time, system availability, accuracy, and ease of use are good. There are a number of areas, however, in which significant proportions of EW supervisors believe there are problems. These areas include the difficulty of performing specific functions, quality of system reports, and difficulty in supporting certain management needs.

Since Alaska's current system has been operational since 1984, comparisons between the current and previous systems would be of limited value. Responses to comparative questions, therefore, are

SYSTEM CHARACTERISTICS

Response Time

What is the quality of overall system response time?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Poor	2	20.0
Good	6	60.0
Excellent	2	20.0

What is the quality of system response time during peak periods?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Poor	5	50.0
Good	5	50.0

How often is the system response time too slow?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Rarely	1	10.0
Sometimes	6	60.0
Often	3	30.0

EW supervisors in Alaska think that overall system response time is acceptable, but half think that response time during peak periods is poor. While 80 percent of the supervisors surveyed think that overall system response time is good or excellent, 30 percent of the supervisors feel that slow response time is a frequent problem.

Availability

How often is the system available when you need to use it?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Rarely	1	10.0
Sometimes	1	10.0
Often	8	80.0

How often is the system down?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Rarely	3	30.0
Sometimes	6	60.0
Often	1	10.0

EW supervisors think that system availability generally is good; only one respondent believes that the system often is unavailable. Although a majority indicated that the system sometimes is down, this downtime apparently is not intrusive enough to detract from the perception of overall system availability.

Accuracy

What is the quality of the information in the system?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Poor	1	10.0
Good	8	80.0
Excellent	1	10.0

Ninety percent of EW supervisors feel that the quality of the system's data is good or excellent.

Ease of Use

How often do you have difficulty obtaining necessary information from the system?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Rarely	5	50.0
Sometimes	5	50.0

How often do you have difficulty learning to use the system?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Rarely	3	33.3
Sometimes	5	55.6
Often	1	11.1

How often do you have difficulty tracking receipt of monthly reporting forms?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Rarely	5	50.0
Sometimes	5	50.0

How often do you have difficulty automatically terminating benefits for failure to file?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Rarely	7	77.8
Sometimes	2	22.2

How often do you have difficulty generating adverse action notices?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Rarely	6	66.7
Sometimes	3	33.3

How often do you have difficulty generating warning notices?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Rarely	6	66.7
Sometimes	3	33.3

How often do you have difficulty determining monthly reporting status?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Rarely	7	77.8
Sometimes	2	22.2

How often do you have difficulty restoring benefits?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Rarely	5	62.5
Sometimes	3	37.5

EW supervisors generally feel that the system is relatively easy to use. For most of the functions discussed, a majority of supervisors indicate that it is rarely difficult to perform the function. The exceptions include obtaining information from the system, learning to use the system, and tracking receipt of monthly

reports. At least half of EW supervisors report sometimes having difficulties in these areas.

FOOD STAMP PROGRAM NEEDS

Supervisor Satisfaction Levels

How often is the system a great help to you in your job?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Rarely	1	10.0
Sometimes	1	10.0
Often	8	80.0

How often is the system an added stress in your job?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Rarely	5	50.0
Sometimes	4	40.0
Often	1	10.0

A significant majority of EW supervisors feel that the system often is a great help in performing their jobs; however, half also feel that the system sometimes or often adds stress.

Management Needs

What is the quality of the reports produced by the system?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Poor	4	44.4
Good	4	44.4
Excellent	1	11.1

What is the quality of the support provided by the technical staff supporting the automated system?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Good	6	60.0
Excellent	4	40.0

How often do you have difficulty making mass changes to the system?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Rarely	3	42.9
Sometimes	2	28.6
Often	2	28.6

How often do you have difficulty meeting Federal reporting requirements?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Rarely	4	50.0
Sometimes	4	50.0

EW supervisors agree that the system meets management needs in some areas, but they have divided opinions in other areas. All supervisors report that technical staff support is good to excellent. A significant minority believes that the quality of system reports is poor, and half of the supervisors feel that it is sometimes difficult to meet Federal reporting requirements. A majority of the supervisors also reports having some problems making mass changes to the system.

Client Service

No data are available to address client service because all the questions in this category compare the current and previous

systems. Since Alaska's system was implemented more than five years ago, comparative questions are not applicable.

Fraud and Errors

No data are available to address fraud and errors with the Alaska system because all the questions in this category compare the current and previous systems. Since Alaska's system was implemented more than five years ago, comparative questions are not applicable.